What is claimed is:

1. A sustained-release tablet comprising caffeine and a hydrophilic polymer wherein caffeine is released from the tablet at a nearly constant rate.

2. The tablet according to claim 1 wherein the polymer is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC), cellulose acetate, cellulose acetate butyrate, polyvinylpyrrolidone or sodium carboxymethyl cellulose.

3. The tablet according to claim 2 which is a homogeneous mixture.

4. The tablet according to claim 3 comprising about 8% to 90% caffeine by weight of tablet.

5. The tablet according to claim 1 wherein the polymer is poly(ethylene oxide) having a molecular weight of about 4×10^6 or greater.

6. The tablet according to claim 5 which is a homogeneous mixture.

7. The tablet according to claim 6 comprising about 8% to 90% caffeine by weight of tablet.

8. The tablet according to claim 7 wherein poly(ethylene oxide) has a molecular weight in the range of about 4×10^6 to 8×10^6.

9. The tablet according to claim 8 comprising about 10 to 92% poly(ethylene oxide) by weight of tablet.

10. The tablet according to claim 9 wherein caffeine is released over a period of about 8 to 24 hours after oral administration.

11. The tablet according to claim 10 comprising a kavalactone.

12. The tablet according to claim 10 wherein the tablet is donut-shaped.

13. The tablet according to claim 7 consisting of poly(ethylene oxide) and caffeine.

14. The tablet according to claim 7 consisting essentially of poly(ethylene oxide) and caffeine.

15. The tablet according to claim 13 wherein poly(ethylene oxide) has a molecular weight in the range of about 4×10^6 to 8×10^6.

16. The tablet according to claim 15 comprising about 50% caffeine by weight of the tablet.

17. The tablet according to claim 15 comprising about 80 to 90% caffeine by weight of the tablet.

18. The tablet according to claim 15 wherein caffeine is released over a period of about 8 to 24 hours after oral administration.

19. The tablet according to claim 18 wherein the tablet is donut-shaped.

20. A sustained-release tablet comprising at least about 40% xanthine-derived stimulant by weight of the tablet and a hydrophilic polymer.

21. The tablet according to claim 20 wherein the stimulant is caffeine, aminophylline, oxtriphylline, theobromine, or theophylline or a mixture thereof.

22. The tablet according to claim 21 wherein the polymer is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC), cellulose acetate, cellulose acetate butyrate, polyvinylpyrrolidone, or sodium carboxymethyl cellulose.

23. The tablet according to claim 21 wherein the polymer is poly(ethylene oxide) having a molecular weight of about 4×10^6 or greater.

24. The tablet according to claim 23 wherein poly(ethylene oxide) has a molecular weight of about 4×10^6 to 8×10^6.

25. The tablet according to claim 23 which consists of the stimulant and poly(ethylene oxide).

26. The tablet according to claim 25 comprising about 50% of the stimulant by weight of the tablet.

27. The tablet according to claim 25 comprising about 80 to 90% of the stimulant by weight of the tablet.

28. A method of preparing a sustained-release caffeine tablet comprising,

mixing caffeine and a hydrophillic polymer to form a mixture; and
compressing the mixture into a tablet.

29. The method according to claim 28 wherein the polymer is poly(ethylene oxide) of a molecular weight of about 4×10^6 or greater.

30. A method for increasing the alertness of a subject comprising orally administering a tablet comprising caffeine and poy(ethylene oxide) wherein poly(ethylene oxide) has a molecular weight of about 4×10^6 or greater.

31. The method according to claim 30 wherein poly(ethylene oxide) has a molecular weight in the range of about 4×10^6 to 8×10^6.

32. The method according to claim 31 wherein the tablet comprises about 8% to 90% of caffeine by weight of the tablet.

33. The method according to claim 32 wherein the tablet consists of caffeine and poly(ethylene oxide).

34. The method according to claim 33 wherein caffeine is released at a nearly constant rate over a period of about 8 to 24 hours after oral administration.